United Nations A/55/176

General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 July 2000

Original: English

Fifty-fifth session
Item 115 of the provisional agenda*
Right of peoples to self-determination

Right of peoples to self-determination

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The right to self-determination is defined as a fundamental human right in the Charter of the United Nations, the two principal human rights covenants, the Declaration on the Right to Development, and other international instruments and declarations.[1]

2. In its resolution 54/155 of 17 December 1999, the General Assembly, inter alia, requested the Commission on Human Rights to continue to give special attention to the violation of human rights, especially the right to self-determination, resulting from foreign military intervention, aggression and occupation, and requested the Secretary-General to report on this question to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session under the item entitled "Right of peoples to self-determination".

3. The present report covers activities carried out between April 1999 and June 2000.

4. At its fifty-sixth session, the Commission on Human Rights considered agenda item 5, entitled "The right of peoples to self-determination and its application to peoples under colonial or alien domination or foreign occupation". An account of the Commission's consideration of the items is contained in the Commission's report.[2]

5. Under agenda item 5, the Commission, on 7 April 2000, adopted three resolutions: resolution 2000/2, on the question of Western Sahara; resolution 2000/3, on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the rights of peoples to self-determination; and resolution 2000/6, on the situation in occupied Palestine.

6. The Commission noted, in resolution 2000/2, that the implementation of the settlement plan was progressing satisfactorily and reiterated its support for a free and impartial referendum in Western Sahara on self-determination. It also urged the Government of Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Rio de Oro to implement the Secretary-General's package of measures relating to the identification of voters, the appeals process and the revised implementation timetable.

7. In resolution 2000/3 the Commission welcomed the report of the Special Rapporteur on the use of mercenaries (E/CN.4/2000/14), which highlighted the need to carry out studies and disseminate information on the adverse effects of mercenary activities on human rights, particularly on the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination. The Commission, noting that mercenary activities had increased and taken new forms, decided to convene a workshop on traditional and new forms of mercenary activities as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination, to be held prior to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

* A/55/150.

00-55189 (E) 280800

8. In resolution 2000/4, the Commission reaffirmed the right of the Palestinians to self-determination, "including the option of a State".

Notes

[1] General Comment 12 of the Human Rights Committee states that the realization of the right to self-determination is essential to the effective guarantee and observation of individual human rights (see HRI/GEN/1/Rev.3).

[2] To be issued as *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2000, Supplement No.* ___ (E/2000/23; E/CN.4/2000/__).